

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01

USIA-06 SS-15 NSC-05 OES-06 EPA-01 CEQ-01 LAB-04

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0346

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FR, UK, US

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PARLIAMENTARY
AND COMMUNIST DELEGATIONS ON CONCORDE

REF: PARIS 6354

1. THE TWO DELEGATIONS THAT WERE THE SUBJECT OF REFTEL WERE RECEIVED BY THE AMBASSADOR MARCH 7 A.M. THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION CONSISTED OF BAUDIS, NEUWIRTH AND GINOUX; NO SOCIALIST ACCOMPANIED. IN ADDITION TO BALLANGER AND PIQUET, COMMUNIST DELEGATION INCLUDED L'HUMANITE REPORTER AND THREE CGT REPS FROM PARIS REGION. ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF THE TWO DELEGATIONS RECEIVED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE FROM PRESS AND TV OUTSIDE THE CHANCERY.

2. BAUDIS LED OFF FOR THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION BUT NEUWIRTH AND GINOUX DID MOST OF THE TALKING. MEETING LASTED FOR NEARLY AN HOUR UNTIL BAUDIS WAS OBLIGED TO DEPART FOR APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD. (RADIO HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANNOUNCED EARLIER BAUDIS WOULD BE MEETING WITH GISCARD IN COMPANY OF STATE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION CAVAILLE TO DISCUSS CONCORDE.) MESSAGE WHICH PARLIAMENTARIANS CONVEYED WAS THAT FRENCH OPINION WOULD SIMPLY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND HOW CONCORDE COULD BE CONDEMNED AT NEW YORK WITHOUT EVEN BEING GIVEN CHANCE TO PROVE

ITSELF FOR A TRIAL PERIOD. THIS WOULD BE CONTRARY TO FRENCH SENSE OF JUSTICE. FRENCH OPINION FAILED COMPLETELY TO GRASP MEANING OF SEPARATION OF POWERS IN US AND WOULD CONCLUDE THAT CONCORDE WAS BEING BANNED FOR PROTECTIONIST REASONS OR TO HURT CONCORDE'S CHANCES UNTIL SUCH TIME AS US COULD RELAUNCH ITS OWN SST. THEY STRESSED THAT CONCORDE WAS ONE ISSUE ON WHICH FRENCH PARLIAMENTARIANS OF EVERY POLITICAL PERSUASION WERE UNITED. GINOUX, WHO IS ALSO MAYOR OF PARIS SUBURB OF MONTROUGE, NOTED THAT WHILE CONCORDE IS ASSEMBLED IN TOULOUSE MANY FIRMS IN PARIS REGION ARE MAJOR SUBCONTRACTORS FOR THE PROJECT AND THUS ALSO HAD A DIRECT STAKE IN CONCORDE. THE PARLIAMENTARIANS SAID THAT AN ADVERSE DECISION ON CONCORDE BY NEW YORK WOULD ONLY HELP THE COMMUNISTS IN THEIR AMBITION TO COME TO POWER IN FRANCE AND WOULD INEVITABLY RESULT IN SERIOUS DETERIORATION OF FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS.

3. MEETING WITH COMMUNIST DELEGATION LASTED ABOUT HALF AN HOUR AND WAS VERY CORDIAL. COMMUNIST PRESENTATION WAS LOW-KEY AND NOT MARRED BY ANY VITUPERATION. PIQUET DID THE TALKING. AFTER THANKING THE AMBASSADOR FOR TAKING THE TIME TO RECEIVE THE DELEGATION, PIQUET SAID PURPOSE OF THE VISIT WAS TO CONVEY TO AMBASSADOR, AND ASK HIM TO CONVEY TO WASHINGTON AND TO NEW YORK AUTHORITIES, A SENSE OF THE EMOTION WITH WHICH FRENCH WORKERS AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION IN GENERAL AWAITED NEW YORK'S DECISION ON CONCORDE. CONCORDE WAS A TEST OF FRIENDSHIP AND OF TRADE TIES BETWEEN OUR TWO PEOPLES. AS WE WELL KNEW, THERE COULD BE A CHANGE IN THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE IN THE NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE WITH THE PCF PLAYING A MUCH MORE IMPORTANT ROLE. IN THAT CONTEXT THE PCF WILL ATTACH GREAT IMPORTANCE TO DEVELOPING TRADE AND OTHER TIES WITH THE US AND WITH FOSTERING TIES OF FRIENDSHIP. CONCORDE WAS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE FRENCH AEROSPACE INDUSTRY AND FOR FUTURE RELATIONS BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE US. PIQUET SAID THAT IN ORDER TO MOBILIZE PUBLIC OPINION PCF HAD ORGANIZED "JOURNEE D'ACTION" IN SUPPORT OF CONCORDE AND HAD ALSO LAUNCHED CAMPAIGN IN L'HUMANITE (PARIS 6197) THAT HAD PRODUCED 400,000 SIGNATURES. RESULTS HAD EXCEEDED ALL EXPECTATIONS. PIQUET SAID HE WOULD NOT BURDEN EMBASSY WITH PRO-CONCORDE PETITION BEARING THESE SIGNATURES BUT PROPOSED TO SEND IT

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DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 PA-01 PRS-01
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DIRECTLY TO THE WHITE HOUSE LATER THIS WEEK.

4. AMBASSADOR TOOK MUCH THE SAME LINE WITH BOTH DELEGATIONS, OUTLINING CONCEPT OF SEPARATION OF POWERS WHICH PROHIBITED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FROM DICTATING TO NEW YORK AUTHORITIES; DESCRIBING ACTIONS WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD TAKEN IN SUPPORT OF CONCORDE, E.G., THE COLEMAN DECISION, FENDING OFF ANTI-CONCORDE MOVES IN CONGRESS, ETC.; REBUTTING PROTECTIONIST ARGUMENT AND DESCRIBING FORCE OF ENVIRONMENTALIST LOBBIES IN US; AND STRESSING HOW MUCH EMBASSY AND AMERICAN COMMUNITY IN FRANCE WERE AWARE OF FRENCH SENSITIVITY OVER CONCORDE ISSUE AND HOPED FOR FAVORABLE OUTCOME. REFERRING TO THE MANY REFERENCES IN FRANCE THESE DAYS TO POSSIBLE RETALIATION IN THE EVENT THE NEW YORK DECISION IS NEGATIVE, THE AMBASSADOR SAID IT WOULD BE REGRETTABLE IF THE US AS A WHOLE AND AMERICANS IN FRANCE WERE MADE THE TARGET OF SUCH MEASURES AS A RESULT OF A DECISION TAKEN BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AT NEW YORK.
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5. AFP REPORTS THAT ON LEAVING THE EMBASSY PIQUET TOLD THE PRESS THAT IN CASE NEW YORK'S DECISION WAS NEGATIVE THE PCF WOULD CONSIDER SENDING A DELEGATION TO THE US TO SEE PRESIDENT CARTER. IF NEED BE, HE SAID, PCF WOULD ORGANIZE A "SIT-IN" IN FRONT OF THE WHITE HOUSE. IN CASE OF A NEGATIVE DECISION, PCF AND FRENCH WORKERS WOULD BE OBLIGED TO TAKE A NUMBER OF MEASURES AGAINST AIRCRAFT OF US CARRIERS SERVING FRENCH AIRPORTS. NEGATIVE DECISION WOULD BE HARMFUL TO FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS WHEREAS, PIQUET IS QUOTED AS SAYING, "WE WANT THESE RELATIONS TO BE AS GOOD AS POSSIBLE." WHEN ASKED ABOUT DELEGATION'S MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR, PIQUET IS REPORTED AS EMPHASIZING IT WAS "VERY COURTEOUS."
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Message Attributes

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